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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Sudan, Syria/France,
Israeli Operation in Lebanon, Palestinian Territories (8/10)
1 Summary: Syrian papers reported President Asad's meeting
with Mostafa Othamn Ismael, Advisor to the Sudanese President,
who reiterated the importance of working to stop Israel's

aggression against Lebanon, and called for withdrawal of
occupation forces from South Lebanon. Ismael expressed
confidence that the Lebanese resistance and the solid internal
front will force the Israeli occupation forces to pull out of
Lebanon. "What is going on in Lebanon gives a clear message to
western countries and Israel that resistance will be permanent
so long as Lebanese land is occupied," Ismael said.

The papers also reported Syrian Information Minister Bilal's
surprise at President Chirac's statement that Syria had denied
statements of Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos at
the end of his visit to Damascus. "What we actually issued was a
correction or denial of what was reported by AFP, which was the
only one among all the news agencies that reported a fabricated
report," Bilal said in a TV interview Wednesday. As for Chirac's
statements about confidence in Syria, the Minister considered
Chirac's lack of confidence in Syria as 'his own problem'. "Syria
is a central and main country in the region and an active member
of the international community, the Arab League, and the
nonaligned group," the minister noted, stressing that Syria has
full confidence in and respect and appreciation for many EU
countries. Bilal indicated that Chirac's popularity has reached
its lowest level recently, at less than 17 . "If late French
President Charles de Gaulle were in such situation, he definitely
would have resigned," the Minister said. Regarding Chirac's
statements about the crime that claimed the life of former
Lebanese Premier Rafik al-Hariri, the Minister clarified that the
UN investigation committee is still working and its latest report
expressed appreciation for Syria's cooperation. He questioned why
the French President's is accusing Syria even before the
committee completes its task. Bilal described Chirac's
accusations as unobjective, saying "his accusations are an
unacceptable attack against a sovereign state that enjoys respect
and appreciation on the international and regional levels".

Papers also cited a televised address by Hassan Nassrallah,
Secretary General of Hizbollah, in which he emphasized the

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importance of unity of the Lebanese ranks on the popular and

official levels, and asked that there be no political or media disputes among the Lebanese, in order to consolidate national unity and prevent the enemy from achieving its goals. Nassrallah said that the Americans are coordinating with the Israelis to instigate sedition and to weaken Lebanese national unity while the battle is raging, stressing that the US-French draft resolution seeks to offer to Israel what it has been unable to achieve in battle. He said that his party dealt with the Lebanese government's seven-point plan positively, pointing out that the deployment of the Lebanese army will be an honorable solution. Nassrallah added that "Americans are still hindering any project for the cessation of hostilities, in order to achieve Israeli interests by continued killing of civilians to pressure the Lebanese people. He warned Israelis against entering South Lebanon because the resistance will kick them out, describing the Israelis as cowards because they kill women and children while the resistance is killing Israeli soldiers and officers. He exhorted the Lebanese political leadership and people to remain patient and steadfast. He said that replacement of the Israeli commander of the northern front is an important development and a sign that the enemy is faltering.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad receives a letter from Sudanese President al-Bashir. Isma'el: What is taking place in Lebanon is an obvious message for the continuation of the resistance" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 8/10)

"Bilal denounces Chirac's latest statements about Syria: Syria is an active member of the international community and enjoys full respect and appreciation" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/10)

"Official Syrian source: Chirac must exert pressure on Israel" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 8/10)

"A month of steadfastness by the Lebanese resistance. Nasrallah's Honest Promise: We will turn the south into a cemetery for invaders. Olmert's government decides to expand its ground offensive. The US administration exerts pressure on the Lebanese government. Resistance fighters kill 15 Israeli soldiers and destroy tanks and bulldozers" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/10)

"Al-Abrash, Speaker of the Syrian Parliament, reviews developments in the region and Syria's position on supporting Lebanon and its resistance, with a Turkish delegation" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/10)

"Five martyrs fall during an Israeli shelling of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hanieh: The Israeli policy targets the Palestinian Authority's infrastructure" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/10)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"The French-American Draft Resolution: A Reward for Israel"

Ibrahim Shugyar, a commentator in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (8/10): "Three weeks of talks and consultations in the Security Council have resulted in an unbalanced Franco-American draft resolution and a flagrant bias toward Israel at the expense of Lebanon and its resistance...."

"The French-American draft supports the criminal and blames the victim.... It appears that Washington, through political bullying, blackmail, pressure, and intimidation, wants to impose its draft resolution without consulting others, especially since it has managed to drag France toward its pro-Israel position, and because the Security Council has become a hostage of the United States and its unilateral hegemonic policy...."

"Dirty Atmosphere"

Khalid al-Ashhab, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (8/10): "Hizbollah's performance over the past four weeks has proven that it is possible to defeat military force no matter the extent of its despotism...."

"Despite the active and malicious war diplomacy that the United States, in coordination with its allies France and Britain, is leading to contain the repercussions of the Israeli aggression, which the capitals of this diplomacy never expected, and to compensate Israel politically for what it has failed to achieve militarily, the fact remains that the resistance option, with the military performance and political creed it entails, will be able to withstand any Israeli or American aggression, and will be able to change and upset the equations and balances of power, and indeed their military, political, and ideological criteria...."

"Take Arab Leaders for Free"

As'ad Abbud, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (8/10): "The intention of the Arab leaders is to eliminate the resistance in Lebanon.... Americans must not repeat the Arab peoples' mistake of relying on Arab leaders.... We relied on them and they let us down...."

"Our problem with them is that they have failed in everything. They are losers. Perhaps their failure is good for the tyrants and those who dominate the world or are trying to dominate it, but this is not sufficient reason for these forces to pay a single penny to buy them. They can take them for free, as a gift from millions of Arabs...."

"The fall of Hizbollah will mean the fall of the thought and culture of Arab resistance.... Arab leaders oppose the triumph of Hizbollah because Hizbollah is the organization that never fired a bullet to remove a political adversary. It never killed a civilian. It never bombed targets that were not accurately defined, except when it was forced to make the enemy understand that what it is doing can be done by others, and only to stop the barbarism of Israel's thought and destruction. Hizbollah, moreover, is a combat structure characterized by integrity, belief, ideology, ability, knowledge, and hard work...."

Corbin